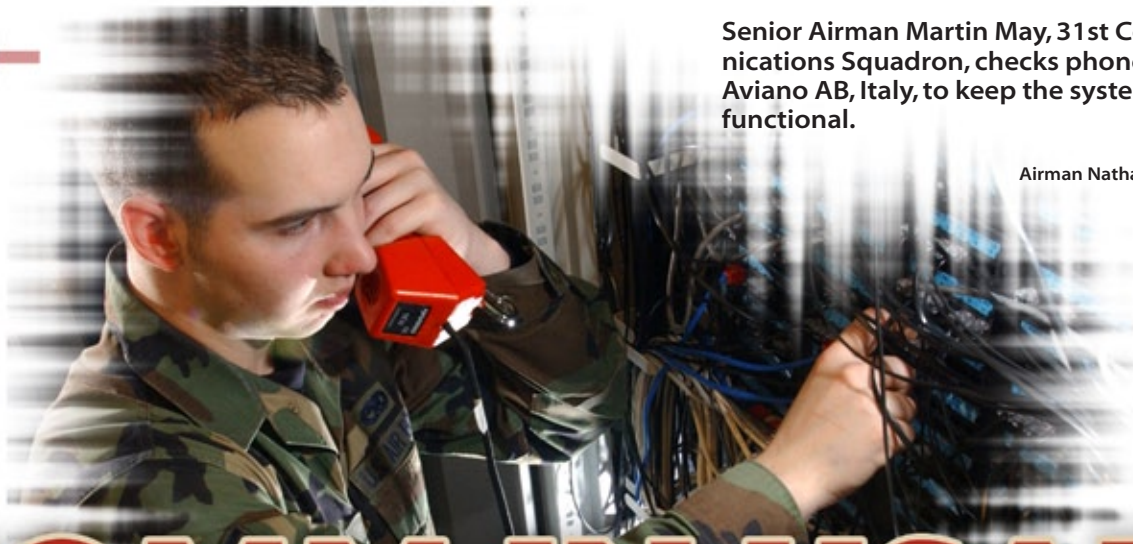




Senior Airman Martin May, 31st Communications Squadron, checks phone lines at Aviano AB, Italy, to keep the system fully functional.

Airman Nathan Doza / 31st CS



COMM IN USAFE

DIVERSITY ACROSS 91 COUNTRIES

By Capt. Billy Pope

Chief, United States Air Forces in Europe,
A6 Director's Action Group

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — United States Air Forces in Europe is surrounded by circumstances that make providing communications and information capabilities anything but ordinary. For starters, the USAFE area of responsibility extends across 91 countries encompassing more than 20.5 million square miles.

USAFE's charge is to provide information dominance to a diverse set of warfighters. To achieve this, interoperability on joint, allied and coalition levels is a must. Secondly, the operational nature of USAFE dictates that the right information must get to the warfighter at the right place and time. Sorting and delivering timely and accurate information can be a knowledge management maze. Lastly, ensuring available information is fully integrated across the operational, logistical, and support functional communities is a challenge USAFE communicators must address.

INTEROPERABLE COMM

Ensuring interoperable communications capabilities with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization na-

tions falls under the purview of the Integrated Evaluation Facility within the USAFE/CSS. The team is working to expand data and intelligence availability on common operating platforms. The Linked Operations-Intelligence Centers Europe system remains the most prevalent information-sharing network for NATO allies, but it is quickly becoming antiquated. **The USAFE/CSS is working with the LOCE Program Management Office to upgrade and interlink LOCE with other available systems to overcome interoperability hurdles.**

MANAGE KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge management and knowledge-based operations are extremely important areas that are for the most part largely unexplored. The USAFE/A6 Enterprise Integration Division assisted in developing the Air Force Concept of Operations for enterprise information management, and has now begun implementing tools and processes to fundamentally change how we access electronic information.

"The way we view information today will be drastically different in years to come," said Ms. Diana Colfack, chief of Enterprise Integration for USAFE. "These changes

will affect all facets of the Air Force, from electronic personnel evaluation report routing to air tasking order generation." These improvements include increased data availability and improved collaboration capabilities.

INTEGRATING DATA

Ensuring relevant data is fully integrated across operational and support communities is a challenge in its own right. The goal is to make real-time information available to decision-makers using an information management schema that is completely transparent to the end-user. This vision is becoming reality through process realignment and system modernization.

"The on-demand access to tailored data, combined with a task-centric process, will significantly improve readiness, operations and support," said Col. Steve Spano, director of USAFE Communications and Information. "USAFE/A6 professionals are focused on providing secure, accurate and timely information to the warfighter.

The future of information technology holds tremendous potential and meeting challenges like those faced in USAFE today will help ensure the United States maintains information supremacy.